

Reviews

Il Carteggio Marcovaldi (1401-1437) nell'Archivio di Stato di Prato, ed. **Paola Pinelli**. [Quaderni della Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato, 106]. Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Dipartimento per i beni archivistici e librari, Direzione generale per gli archivi, 2006. ISBN 88-7125-268-3. Pages 151.

Paola Pinelli, researcher in economic history of the Faculty of Economy in Florence, has recently published an excellent inventory that opens perspectives to those examining Dubrovnik's economic history of the first half of the fifteenth century. The material concerns the correspondence of the Marcovaldi brothers, kept in *Ospedale della Misericordia e Dolce* fund of the State Archive of Prato (*Archivio di Stato di Prato*). The letters mainly pertain to economic issues, and have been filed in the mentioned fund together with the private archivalia of the Marcovaldi family. Dispersed until recently, today they are collected, arranged and equipped with an inventory, thus allowing more systematic research.

The collection of 827 letters spans more than 30 years, but the most valuable and to us most appealing are the letters of Giuliano Marcovaldi, written during his days in Dubrovnik between 1420 and 1434. Pinelli's introduction singles out the merchants trading between Tuscany, Puglia and Dubrovnik at the time when many Tuscan merchants (especially those of Prato) pursued new markets beyond their recession-stricken homeland. Among those who decided to venture in cloth trade (exported from Tuscany to the Balkan interior) and silver (imported from the Balkans) along with other commercial pursuits in the broader Dalmatian region was the trade company of Prato, managed by Michele di Giovannino Marcovaldi and Francesco Moddei. As the volume of trade increased, there arose a need for a company representative (*fattore*) to be permanently posted in Dubrovnik, the city through which most goods were channelled, but also a developed commercial centre in its

own right with a privileged status in exporting silver from the inland. Giuliano Marcovaldi, Michele's nephew, proved the best person for the task. For Giuliano, retailer, that was an opportunity he benefited from: he settled in Dubrovnik and further developed his trade connections, among whom there also happened to be Pietro Pantella, notable dyer, who eventually moved to Dubrovnik in order to set up his own cloth manufacture. Giuliano spent 20 years in Dubrovnik, where he established himself and had two sons with his maid Stanisava. After father's death, the children were provided for by their uncle Sandro. The lifestory of Sandro Marcovaldi, as gleaned from the brothers' correspondence, was somewhat complementary to that of Giuliano. The latter devoted his entire life to business pursuits, on account of which he spent most of his days away from home, journeying between Kotor, Korčula, the Neretva and Puglia. Sandro, elder of the two, remained within the confines of Tuscany, holding diverse public offices in Prato and attending to family affairs, including the welfare of the illegitimate sons of his early-departed brother Giuliano.

The major ventures undertaken by the mentioned group of merchants in Dubrovnik included exchange of average weave cloth from Prato and Florence for silver from Serbian and Bosnian mines, channelled further to the courts of Europe hungering for silver; also, in Puglia cloth was exchanged for grain and other goods which could have a good market in Dubrovnik. Numerous financial transactions involved Venice as well. In lucrative and propulsive trade such as this, Ragusan merchants were important partners, especially because of their safe and well established routes to the Bosnian and Serbian silver mines.

Scholars studying fifteenth-century Dubrovnik, and more narrowly, its economic history, will no doubt be overwhelmed by this inventory and the information a research into the Marcovaldi fund could provide. Merchants of Prato in Dubrovnik have been addressed in a number of publications (particularly M. Popović-Radenković), but here we are dealing

with a significant corpus of fairly obscure or completely unknown material. Paola Pinelli has already consulted it in her study »L'Argento di Ragusa« (*Storia economica* 8/3 (2005): pp. 549-573), and is currently preparing a comprehensive study on Piero Pantella. The historians of Dubrovnik are especially keen to know more about the Ragusans with whom these merchants traded and exchanged letters (Nikola Gozze, Piero Primo et al.), as well as to see the picture of Ragusan everyday life as observed by the Tuscan incomer.

In addition to introductory study (pp. 19-40), the inventory encompasses six 'perspectives' (*Prospetti*; pp. 42-70), in which parts of the fund have been arranged into larger, more rounded divisions (correspondence of Sandro Marcovaldi, Michele Marcovaldi, correspondence of the Marcovaldi brothers, Giuliano's travels, Giuliano's letters, correspondence of Pietro Pantella). The list of archival funds and literature (pp. 71-74) is followed by an inventory in the true sense of the word, compiled by the criteria of the place to and from which the letter was sent, names of senders and addressees arranged chronologically (pp. 75-117). The tables provide a link between new catalogue references and the two older ones, facilitating identification of the letters already cited in literature (pp. 119-129). The indexes have been compiled chronologically by sender, addressee, place of despatch and delivery (pp. 131-151). In sum, an excellent, comprehensive and meticulous work. Future explorers of the Marcovaldi correspondence will benefit considerably by this inventory, saving a lot of effort, time and anxiety on preparation. The material has been digitised and will soon be available on the Archive's official web (www.archiviodistato.prato.it). With Paola Pinelli's inventory at hand, we shall be able to read business letters penned more than six hundred years ago which travelled between Tuscany, Puglia, Dalmatian towns and Dubrovnik, bearing witness to the lively commercial contacts of the day.

Nella Lonza

Robert Holjevac, *Ivan Stojković i njegovo doba (u svjetlu borbe za jedinstvo Crkve i carigradske misije) / Ivan Stojković and his age (in the light of the struggle for the union of the Churches and the Constantinople mission)/*. Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2004. Pages 227.

A prominent figure of the Dubrovnik-born Dominican friar Ivan Stojković (1392/5-1443) has drawn considerable attention of Croatian scholars over the last few decades. The work of a man who played an important role in the religious ferments of the first half of the fifteenth century has generally been examined along two main routes. While theological experts tend to construct their approach by interpreting Stojković's theoretical views on the ecclesiastical community as a whole, particularly those expounded in his *Tractatus de Ecclesia*, historians, rather, place emphasis on his personal contacts with the high dignitaries of non-Catholic religious communities. Thus the author of this book faced a difficult and ambitious task of making a balanced approach to Stojković's life and work from both directions. The fruit of his labour is here under review, based on the Master's thesis defended on the Faculty of Philosophy (Department of History) in Zagreb in 2001. A chronological approach, aimed to guide the reader through the complex historical background of the Mediterranean basin in the early fifteenth century, a period that witnessed the rise of new powers and decay of the old, calls for flawless knowledge of all the relevant facts. Regrettably, the book suffers from a few major inconsistencies which inevitably affect the interpretation.

Erroneous dating of the conflict between Dubrovnik and Herzeg Stjepan Vukčić Kosača in the 1430s (pp. 24-25) instead of 1451-1454, leads to an ill-grounded conclusion that despite a heavy defeat against Tamerlane in the battle of Ankara in 1402, the Ottoman Empire managed to make a most speedy recovery so as to be able to restore control in the remote areas

such as this and intervene in the local skirmishes. Similarly, in the context of interpreting Dubrovnik's relations with the Holy See in the first half of the fifteenth century, the reader is led to believe that it was Pope Eugenius IV who had confirmed Ragusan privileges to trade with the Muslim world, commonly known as *Privilegium navigationis ad partes Orientis*. The fact of the matter is that the Ragusans received this important privilege from the Church Council of Basle, and not the pope himself (p. 22). Presumably a lapsus calami is also the statement that it was Pope Gregory IX who, in 1373, issued Dubrovnik the first privilege to trade with the Muslims (p. 22), whereas it should have been Pope Gregory XI.

Equally obscure is the statement that it was not until the 1380s that the Ragusans made their first contacts with the Ottoman sultans (p. 21), as those contacts and the Ragusan demands for trade privileges are rightly dated in the middle of the fourteenth century, when the Osmanlis consolidated their rule in the Balkans. Such an early development of the relations with the Turks thus testifies to the far-sighted policy of the subjects of the future Republic of St Blaise. Nowadays, historians tend to interpret the golden age of Dubrovnik as a fifteenth rather than sixteenth-century phenomenon, as generally claimed until recently.

Further, author's assumption that Stojković had "most probably" studied at the general Dominican College in Zadar shortly after its opening in 1396 (p. 41) is pure speculation. Supposing this claim were true, it alone would have a sweeping effect on the current interpretations of Stojković's scholarly career, who, granted a bursary from the Ragusan government, studied at the University of Padua and later Paris University, where he obtained his doctoral degree in theology. Holjevac makes no attempt to afford evidence on the high honours and church titles Stojković received from the Ragusan Senate as an apology for not having accepted his proposition to establish a university in Dubrovnik, no proof being provided for this statement either. These issues should not be left

untackled, particularly because little attention has been devoted to Stojković's activity prior to the Council of Basle, bringing the book's comprehensiveness into question.

Following a general survey, the focus of Holjevac's attention shifts towards broader considerations of the circumstances in which Stojković acted, with special emphasis on ecclesiastical structures. Viewed methodologically, the instruction on the relatedness between conciliarism as an idea and ecclesiology as an auxiliary theological science certainly calls for attention (p. 26), but remains only partially developed mainly because the work *Tractatus de Ecclesia* was poorly consulted. The statement that wealthier orders were generally of German provenance (p. 27) is disputable, considering that the Benedictines as the protagonists of the Cluny Church reform and the later orders of the Templars and the Hospitaliers were principally recruited from French families, whereas most members of the order of the Teutonic Knights were German. Author's interpretation of the atrophy of the Eastern Christendom is more than arbitrary, here being described as "original spirituality based on patristics", whose decay was to be accounted by the "sedimentation of the historical-political-church practice over the centuries of Byzantium's history" (p. 35). The state of Eastern Christianity which, in Stojković's day, was still primarily symbolized by the institution of the Constantinople patriarchy, is interpreted consistently through "religious agony resulting also from the traditional fossilization of the Orthodox or, rather, Greek theological thought and dogma in general, leading to the first irrational streaming of its spirituality and mysticism, and then, viewed globally, to an atrophy of the whole theological system and apparatus of the Greek Church at the time when Stojković arrived in Constantinople" (p. 62). This interpretation stands in contradiction to the later emphasis on the Greeks as the only legitimate defenders of the church universalism of the period.

All of the important aspects of Stojković's activity reflect through his striving for the

ecclesiastical unity of all Christians, materialized in the community named *Ecclesia militans*. His colourful career was thus largely determined by the pursuit of this idea: he was general secretary of the Council of Basle, official negotiator with the Hussite representatives at the same Council, fervent advocate for the Ragusan trade privileges in the Muslim Orient, diplomat received by the Byzantine Emperor John VIII and the Patriarch of Constantinople Joseph II, active theologian fighting against papacy as the supreme religious authority in the Christian world. The author weaves a close chronological link between the beginning of the teaching of Jan Hus and the Ottoman tragic defeat at Ankara in 1402, when Western Europe and Christianity failed to take advantage of the situation and form the much-desired unity (p. 33). His view of "Stojković having a prominently Roman conception of ecclesiology" (p. 107) is somewhat confusing if we know that Stojković's last years were marked by the conflict with the Roman pope Eugenius IV, because Stojković supported the counter-pope Felix V who had honoured him with the cardinal's title. The relationship with the Hussites is primarily presented through detailed quotations of the discussions held at the Council of Basle at the beginning of 1433 (pp. 47-57). The head of the Hussite delegation and Stojković's chief opponent, Jan Rokyzana, later Archbishop of Prague, is unjustly described as an inept theologian, while the conclusion that after the Council they departed in peace casts a shadow on the deep and irreconcilable conflict between two church doctrines that eventually led to the Reformation. Contrarily, thanks to persistent church schisms in the West and conflicts supported by eminent theologians from Croatian lands such as Stojković himself, later Andrija Jamometić, Matija Vlačić Ilirik and Markantun de Dominis (pp. 31-32), the Reformation justified its cause.

As suggested by the subtitle, the emphasis of the book is placed on Stojković's attitude towards Eastern Christianity as it evolved during the two years of his stay at the imperial court in Constantinople acting as head of the

diplomatic mission of the Church Council of Basle. A generally-grounded conclusion that Byzantium was doomed to collapse because it did not accept the developments of the Western civilization (p. 95) is much too simple a view of the last two centuries of the dying Empire, temporarily reanimated by the Palaeologus dynasty in 1261. Older historians, especially Georgij Ostrogorski, persisted in the view that the restoration itself inevitably led the Empire to its downfall, while the small Nicene state as its formal founder could outlive it. The future showed that the tiny states, such as the Trabzon Empire, experienced less Ottoman pressure and thus outlived the once mighty Byzantium.

But here one should focus on the spiritual-theological aspect of the problem. An approach from the Western perspective might easily lead to a biased and unobjective interpretation. For instance, is it right to speak of Hesychastic movement only from the aspect of deep social crisis with which the decaying Empire was faced for the last time, even if Hesychasm of the Orthodox monks from the Mount Athos was viewed as an escape from reality? It is beyond dispute that later traditions of the Byzantine church and state were transferred to the territory of Russia, where, in the ensuing centuries, developed into a specific form, including also the mystic movements such as Hesychasm, or personal search for the light of God. Thus the statement that "following the fall of Constantinople, Christianity and Europe were reduced to a single wing, the Western one" (p. 107) is seemingly biased, yet scant attention has been paid to the possible relations and similarities between Stojković and the Metropolitan of Kiev, Isidore, who, together with the highest officials of the Byzantine state and Church, attended the Church Council of Florence in 1437 (p. 149-150).

One may easily fall into a trap by ignoring the ongoing crisis of the medieval West. Moreover, the crisis that spread throughout the Christian world in the first half of the fifteenth century manifested in two forms: in the West it was essentially religious, whereas in the East it was political. Holjevac is well aware of this, as

well as the fact that the Byzantine emperor needed urgent military aid from the West in order to survive the Ottoman attacks, while the pope was in search of the support of the Eastern Church authorities to suppress the growing advocates of conciliarism (p. 103). The author rightly points to the fact that in the turmoils of the 1430s the Greeks were those who preserved the feeling for the universal character of the Church and its structures. Thus it is clear that the comments on the antiquated and atrophied Greek theological thought cannot be accepted, and neither can the author's additional attempt to explain his view by stating that the "complete atrophy of the theological-philosophical apparatus of the Greek Church" is to be also accounted by the Byzantine rejection of the Thomistic doctrine, despite Demeter Cidon's successful translations of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas (pp. 70-71 and pp. 139-140). Adoption of the Thomistic doctrine would not have saved the Greek theological thought, but merely determined a new direction of its development. It should be noted that even the West had difficulty in reaching a consensus on the acceptance of Thomas' doctrine. A most direct link between Thomas Aquinas and Ivan Stojković may be observed through the dissemination of Latin translations of pseudo-Islamic writings. It is a fact that Stojković borrowed from Thomas' *Summa contra gentiles* the sources on Islamic religion for his own theological treatise *Tractatus de Ecclesia*. Yet during his stay at Constantinople Stojković found the original texts, which were previously known to him only through Thomas' work.

The Muslim issue has been singled out as one of Stojković's essential preoccupations, from his indefinite plans on the conversion of all Osmanlis to the solutions for concrete problems in Bosnia which, at the time, could only be anticipated. Yet, trying to explain the spread of Islam through Bosnia, the author allows another mistake, overlooking the balance between Catholic, Orthodox and 'heretical' groups, who were all represented in Bosnia before islamization. By writing that in the latter half of the fifteenth century "the process of

Islamisation spread throughout Bosnia and involved the majority of the population, including the Catholics, former members of various heretical groups, but also the Orthodox, who, prior to the coronation of the Bosnian king Tvrtko I in 1377 were non-existent" (p. 60), the author denies the existence of Orthodox Christians in early medieval Bosnia. This fact is hardly acceptable, more so because he neglects the long-established relations, and conflicts even, that the Ragusans first had with the great *župans* of Rascia, and later with Serbian kings, lords of Hum, from the end of the twelfth century until the middle of the fourteenth century. Today a classic, Vinko Foretić's *Povijest Dubrovnika do 1808*, vol. I (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1980), contains the most perceptive commentary on this problem. The connection between the scholars who, under the protection of the Cluny abbot Peter the Venerable, translated Koran and a number of pseudo-Islamic legends from Arabic into Latin in the mid-twelfth century with Stojković's mission to Constantinople, where he discovered these translations, had them copied and sent to the West is a well known fact. The book before us should be credited for interpreting this connection in the light of Stojković's projects on the conversion of the Osmanlis, and not only through commonly drawn parallels between isolated domestic writers, translator Hermann of Dalmatia and theologian Ivan Stojković. The topic of personal ties is emphasised by the concluding comparison between Stojković and Andrija Jamometić, theologian from Nin from the second half of the fifteenth century, who, despite pope's protest, organised the Church Council in Basle and ended up strangled in a dungeon.

Author's presentation gradually shifts from generally-grounded views and facts on the historical processes and the role of Ivan Stojković in them to the latter's personal views gleaned from the letters he sent from Constantinople to Basle. A welcome contribution to the history of Croatia is an interesting report on the outbreak of plague in Pula (Istria), where the Council delegation headed by Stojković

stopped on its way from Basle to Constantinople via Venice. Ample reference has been made to other documents, such as the Golden Bull of Emperor John VIII and the epistle of the Basle Fathers. Appended are the documents quoted from the work *Studi storici sul concilio di Firenze* by Eugenio Cecconi, Italian Church historian from the nineteenth century. Cited in Latin and in Croatian translation, these documents contain the letters Stojković and Simon Freron sent from Constantinople to Basle, the texts of the Golden and Lead Bull, as well as the letters of the Constantinople Patriarch Joseph II to the Fathers gathered at the Church Council in Basle.

Separate indexes of personal names, geographical and place-names offer the reader easy and useful guidance. Readability, however, is impaired by a weary typographic layout with closely spaced lines and pages often lacking the necessary spacing between the passages. Apart from three illustrations of Dubrovnik, the book contains no other plates.

Undoubtedly the result of impressive labour, the book's success remains a question. The reasons are of diverse nature. An ambitiously conceived goal required most thorough preparations. Although many of the primary sources have been published, there still remains a vast array of unresearched manuscript materials which deserve their place in this study, notably the series of the State Archives of Dubrovnik. The author also failed to consult all the available published sources, such as *Situs aedificiorum* by Philippus de Diversis, in which the famous Ragusan grammar master from Lucca points to the activities of his contemporary Ivan Stojković. Hopefully, future research will also unravel the mystery of his date of birth. Further, biased interpretation of certain historical events is mostly the result of less than complete familiarity with the actual facts. However, the material provided by this book will certainly encourage an attentive reader to focus more closely on the work of Ivan Stojković.

Relja Seferović

Milovan Tatarin, *Feniks: Život i djelo Nikolice Bunića /Phoenix: Life and Work of Nikolica Bunić*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 2004. Pages 285.

The monograph of Milovan Tatarin, lecturer in older Croatian literature at the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek (Croatia), casts a new light upon Ragusan literature of the Baroque and upon the understanding of the world and circumstances in which it developed. In the focus of Tatarin's scholarly attention is the literary work of Nikolica (Bona) Bunić, younger son of the famous Baroque poet Đivo Bunić Vučić. As patrician and government official, Nikolica Bunić played an important role in the Republic's dramatic days following the disastrous earthquake of 1667, as well as in delicate diplomatic dealings with Venice and the Ottoman Empire. During his mission to the Porte, he was thrown into a dungeon in Silistra, where he died in 1678.

It was upon his selfless dedication and sacrifice for the Republic that Nikolica Bona earned his place in both literary history and historiography, precedence being given to him as an able diplomat and loyal patriot over a poet. His poetic gift has been persistently underrated by literary historians, and was never to become the subject of an intensive study and interpretation. In more recent comprehensive surveys of Croatian literature (Frangeš, Jelčić), Nikolica Bona is not even mentioned, although there have been attempts at redefining his literary status (Slobodan P. Novak).

Challenged by the redefinition itself, Tatarin embarked upon bringing to light all of Bona's known texts dispersed in the collections of numerous archives and libraries. Once compiled, the manuscripts were textually analyzed and interpreted through their historical and religious contexts. Modest, if significant, Bona's poetic achievements are appraised aesthetically. Tatarin asserts that the discovery of Bona's "neglected poetic world", in which he finds a reinterpreted biblical story, psychological portrayal, subtlety in characterisation and figurative speech, despite unvaried theme and

genre, contributes to the picture of Croatian literary Baroque. Tatarin concludes that Nikola Bona fully mastered the Baroque poetic style, and certain descriptive portions from his work prove a “beautiful example of the Baroque appeal for the picturesque”.

In addition to the carefully investigated biography, bibliography and critical studies, comparison between his verse and that of his older and younger contemporaries, Tatarin’s monograph affords well-grounded and useful information on all manuscripts of his works, such as the chronology of their composition, differences, as well as interpretation of the printed editions of Bona’s verse. Particular value of this book lies in the author’s attempt to publish all of Bona’s known works in modern transcription, making them accessible to the general reader.

Slavica Stojan